



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **Week Two of Indoor Air Quality Month Focuses on the Effects of Secondhand Smoke**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Week two of *Home Indoor Air Quality Month* is Environmental Tobacco Smoke Awareness Week and is a great time to remind families about the negative impact that secondhand smoke can have on the health of their loved ones health, according to Karalee Harper, director of the North Dakota Department of Health's Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control.

Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed October 2008 as *Home Indoor Air Quality Month* to encourage North Dakotans to learn more about indoor air quality issues.

Environmental tobacco smoke is more commonly known as secondhand smoke, and it includes the smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette or cigar and the smoke exhaled by smokers. Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, many of which can cause cancer.

"A 2006 Surgeon General's report indicated that there is *no* risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke," Harper said. "Children are especially vulnerable. When youngsters are in environments where there is secondhand smoke, they are at an increased risk of respiratory diseases, ear infections and severe asthma. When infants are exposed to secondhand smoke, there is an increased possibility that they could die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)."

Harper offers several tips that families can follow to protect their loved ones from secondhand smoke.

- Make sure your home and car are smoke-free.
- Ask people not to smoke around you or your children.

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*Visit the health department home page at [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).*

- Make sure your children's in-home day-care center is smoke-free.
- Teach your children to stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke if you are pregnant.

"Breathing even a little secondhand smoke can be harmful to your health," Harper said. "Following the tips to avoiding secondhand smoke is a great start to providing a healthy environment for your family. And if you smoke, the single most important thing you can do to protect your loved ones is to get help with quitting."

Free, confidential help with quitting tobacco is available through the North Dakota Tobacco Quitline, which can be reached by calling 1.800.QUIT.NOW.

For more information about secondhand smoke, contact Karalee Harper, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4517 or 800.280.5512. For more information about *Home Indoor Air Quality Month*, contact Justin Otto, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.5188.

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